

VENTRON/ VELSICOL NEW JERSEY

EPA ID# NJD980529879



EPA REGION 2
CONGRESSIONAL DIST. 09
Bergen County
Wood-Ridge Borough

Other Names:
Thiokol Chemical
Wood-Ridge Chemical

Site Description

The 40-acre Ventron/Velsicol site operated as a chemical processing plant from 1929 until 1974. During that time, it is believed that approximately 160 tons of process waste were buried on site. The Ventron facilities were abandoned and demolished in 1974. Two buildings have been erected on site where the old mercury processing plant stood; presently, one of these buildings is used as a food distribution center and the other for warehousing activities (mercury levels are well below action levels). Contaminants still remain on site and are suspected of migrating off site in groundwater and air. The Ventron/Velsicol site is located in a densely populated and industrialized area; however, access to the site is restricted. There are approximately 11,600 people living within a 1-mile radius of the site. The site is adjacent to Berry's Creek. Discharges from the site are known to have contaminated the Creek with mercury and other chemicals. Mercury levels in the creek adjacent to the site are among the highest known in freshwater ecosystems nationwide.

Site Responsibility: This site is being addressed through Federal, State, and potentially responsible parties' actions.

NPL LISTING HISTORY

Proposed Date: 09/01/83
Final Date: 09/01/84

Threats and Contaminants



Soils, sediments, surface water, and groundwater are contaminated with mercury. Off-site sediments and surface water are also contaminated with mercury. Nearby residents could be exposed to site-related contaminants when drinking or touching the water or sediments in the creek. In addition, on-site workers may also be exposed to contaminants located in the soils and sediments. Migration of site-related contaminants is impacting the neighboring wetlands. Exposure to mercury via consumption of organisms in Berry's Creek may impact the human and wildlife consumers.



Cleanup Approach

This site is being addressed in two phases. The first phase will address the contamination of soils and groundwater on the 40 acre property. The second phase will address contamination of marsh, wetland areas and all waterways.



Response Action Status



Entire Site: A potentially responsible party, in cooperation with the State of New Jersey, has commenced investigations into site contamination and the most effective methods to clean up the site. An initial remedial investigation

of the site was performed to determine the nature and extent of site contamination. Further investigations of soil contamination offsite and in the warehouse area on-site are on-going, as is additional investigation of groundwater contamination. An initial study concerning the amount and the effects of mercury accumulation in fish, as well as other organisms in the food chain of the affected area, was completed in 1988. Aquatic organisms were found to have bioaccumulated mercury. EPA and NJDEP have agreed that EPA will take the lead for the second phase of investigations addressing contamination in Berry's Creek and its adjacent wetlands and water bodies. EPA is currently developing its approach for further remedial investigations.



Cleanup Progress

Sampling of surrounding areas led to the discovery of elevated mercury levels in soil at nine residential properties and one publicly owned tract. In the fall of 1990, contaminated soils were removed from these properties and replaced with clean fill.

A draft Remedial Investigation report as well as draft baseline human health and ecological risk assessments, addressing the 40-acre property, were submitted in 2000 and 2001. A final Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study addressing the contaminated soil and groundwater on the 40 acre property is anticipated for 2002. EPA anticipates initiating Remedial Investigations for Berry's Creek, wetlands and water bodies in 2002.

